

BITS students excel at Boeing varsity innovation development prog

■ BY A REPORTER
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VASCO: Student team of BITS Pilani, K K Birla Goa Campus- Project PINAKA - was declared winner at recently concluded Boeing University Innovation Leadership Development (BUILD) programme.

Six winning teams, three student teams and three teams amongst early-stage start-ups were selected from 26 finalist teams. The programme attracted a record number of entrants, many from tier II and III cities, with more than 850 students and early-stage innovation teams applying from across India. 82 teams were shortlisted through a stringent evaluation process to enter the programme's regional boot camps.

Project PINAKA is a team of motivated engineers mentored by prof Shibu



Team members of project PINAKA with mentor prof Shibu Clement.

Clement, associate professor, Dept of Mechanical Engineering, working

to introduce AI into Aviation. Team included Saksham Agrawal, Kshittij

Chhabra, Harshwardhan Shirodkar, Devanshu Wakhale, Srisreyas S, Harshvardhan Chandrasekar, Bharat Gupta, Prithvi Ramesh, Shambhavi Singh and Devansh Gupta.

The team innovated Solar Endurance UAV. It is an artificially intelligent autopilot system which is being made to be deployed on electric fixed wing drone. An array of sensors are placed in different configurations, this data is fused together and processed by an AI system which then predicts wind patterns. The post processing system then uses this data to enter air streams to conserve energy. So far the team has made one prototype to collect test data.

The BUILD programme is Boeing's unique aerospace innovation, leadership and talent nurturing program for university students, faculty and early-stage start-ups. The programme in-

vited ideas in the fields of aerospace, autonomous vehicles, advanced manufacturing, augmented and virtual reality, artificial intelligence and machine learning, materials, robotics and the Internet of Things.

The incubator programme launched in collaboration with seven incubators: IIT Delhi, IIT Gandhinagar, IIT Bombay, IIT Madras, IISc Bangalore, T-Hub Hyderabad and KIIT Bhubaneswar.

The BITS teams entered Boeing BUILD competition four months ago and since then Boeing has provided students rigorous training in understanding the entrepreneurial process along with business modelling. Students passed through five stages of the competition where two rounds were interviews with the jury and two rounds were regional and national level pitch competitions.